Lands and Planning Minister Dr Chris Burns today announced the amendment to the NT Planning Scheme which sets the parameters within which the planned redevelopment of the Darwin City Waterfront will occur.

The proposed amendment was on public exhibition from 29 October to 26 November.

“The major issue raised in the public consultation process concerned the height ‘envelopes’ for buildings in areas adjacent to the escarpment,” Dr Burns said.

“To clarify this issue, and to provide certainty concerning building heights, the maximum height limits have been reduced substantially.

“Where previously the maximum building height adjacent to the escarpment was between 34.1m AHD and 36.5m AHD, it now ranges from 22m AHD to 27.5m AHD, following the undulations of the escarpment.

“This represents a reduction of nearly 40 per cent in places, and means that buildings adjacent to the escarpment will not be higher than that section of the escarpment.

“It should be noted that a number of submissions to the Development Consent Authority recommended a single height limit of 25m AHD for areas adjacent to the escarpment.

“However, the architectural advice I have received indicates that a single plateau height is undesirable.”

In other changes to the proposed amendment:

- The maximum height of the Convention and Exhibition Centre is reduced to 24.5m AHD from 35m AHD;

- The maximum height of buildings on three of the finger wharves is reduced to 36m AHD from 43.7m AHD. On the fourth finger wharf, the maximum building height is reduced to 43m AHD from 50.9m AHD.

Another issue raised by the DCA concerns the height of the sea wall.

“Following expert advice from marine engineers, I have decided to retain the height at 5.5m AHD,” Dr Burns said.

The amendment to the NT Planning Scheme will facilitate the development of the Waterfront area with mixed use commercial, residential and entertainment purposes.

It also includes the making of a new incorporated document - ‘Darwin City
Waterfront Planning Concepts’ – which comprises planning principles and a land use concept drawing.

“This amendment to the Planning Scheme seeks to balance growth with lifestyle,” Dr Burns said.

“The planning principles contained in the amendment include guidelines for achieving cultural and historical sensitivity and connected open spaces.

“There are also guidelines for site responsive design, energy efficiency, and the use of appropriate construction material.”

The new document will guide the Development Consent Authority when it considers development applications for land within the Darwin City Waterfront.